How To Meet the Doctrine of Election

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"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me." Matthew 15:24,25.

You that know the loving heart of our Lord Jesus are quite sure that He would never needlessly discourage a soul in coming to Him. Yet in this case, "He answered her not a word." Is Jesus dumb when misery entreats a word from Him? The Friend of Man is usually all attraction, encouragement, drawing and welcoming—yet the eager woman cries in vain to Him for her tormented daughter! We are not disquieted about this. We know our Lord too well to suspect Him of a lack of love. He is not sporting with a wounded bird. He is in no fit of bitterness. He would not even seem to discourage any heart that beat within a human bosom unless there had been some great necessity for it, some gracious end to be served.

Nobody will have the impudence to accuse our Divine Lord of undue harshness to a soul that sought His help. The world might suspect some of His ministers of being hard and cold, like yon pulpits of marble which have, in these chill times, been exalted among the people. They might think some of us more touchy than tender, for are not some of us great stone creatures almost without feeling and not easily to be approached? People may suspect that we are scant in affection, or that we lack earnestness—they may even hint that we are too great sticklers for orthodoxy, or that we are so distrustful of our fellow men that we naturally love to try them with things harsh and forbidding in order to keep them a good mile off at the least! I know they think us sorry fathers, more ready with the rod than with our cheering sympathies— and for this they have far too much justification. I would it were not so.

You may suppose hard things of us, who are His servants. The supposition may be true. It may be slanderous—but you cannot suppose anything of the kind concerning the Lord Jesus Christ—He is so evidently loving, gracious and cordial that you could not have the heart to suspect Him! If Jesus has ever received you, you have had, in that fact, unquestionable proof of His tenderness and you are, and will be, henceforth, confident in His compassion. You are sure that the "bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench," for He neither broke nor quenched you. Yet He did discourage this woman. Not only the disciples did so, but the Master did so, too. Therefore, I say that there must have been a secret need for so doing—there must have been a motive for her good which moved the tender Lord to answer her with words so harshly—and with speech so dispiriting.

I believe that we, dear Friends, the humble imitators of the Lord Jesus Christ, are bound to encourage all in whom there is any hope. Whenever we see a wandering soul turning its face homewards, we should be ready to lend a hand to direct its tottering footsteps. Still, if we imitate our Lord, we may be led to say sore things which, like the faithful wounds of a friend, are as sharp as they are salutary. Love's lips do not always drop honey! Flattery charms with her dulcet periods, but a wise affection full often uses tones most harsh and cutting. There is a tendency among certain goody-goody people to comfort too much and to keep back important Truths of God for fear they should be misunderstood. Glorious doctrines which made our fathers strong are left in the shade for fear they should become stumbling blocks to unsettled minds! We are coming to be rather overdone with the Gospel prepared for infant'—they are putting the flour through so many sieves that there will not be an ounce of bone-making material left in it!

If it were always wise to comfort and encourage, the Master would have kept to that line of things. But, since He did not do so, I assume—and I think that none will dare to contradict me—that men require something else beside encouragement. Do we not read that "all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,

for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"? There are Truths which ought not to be kept back because they may not encourage, for their use is to reprove and correct. There are Truths which, at certain seasons, ought to be told, even though the temporary effect may be to dampen the ardor or to dull the hope of the sinner who is coming to Christ. Like our Master, we must always long after the salvation of sinners and, like He, we must go about it wisely. We must exhibit great fatherly tenderness toward sinners and be very gentle, even as a shepherd is with the lambs—but that very love, that very tenderness will lead the well-instructed teacher to utter many things which the disciple had rather not hear!

Our shepherdry deals not only with the green pastures, but also with the place of the sheep-washing and the shearing. We have not only to console, but to correct—ours is the edification which deals frequently with pulling down dilapidated bits of wall in order to the security of the whole fabric—and, therefore, we occasionally seem to be destroyers where we are really builders, together with God! Our Lord knew that plain speech upon a certain Truth would weed out His disciples. Did He, therefore, preserve a discreet silence? Not He! In due time He delivered His soul and we read, "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

We now come to consider why the Savior spoke to this woman in this way. Why did He announce to her a fact which could not possibly assist or strengthen her faith? We may learn the answer as we proceed. Our Lord Jesus virtually discouraged the Syrophenician woman with the Doctrine of Election. I grant you that there is a difference between the election of the nation of Israel and the election of individuals—but into that we are not going,

tonight. The point is this—it was the Doctrine of Election which the Savior threw in this poor woman's way. He said to her, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This was enough to dampen her spirit, surely, and yet the Savior put it before her then and there.

Why? I think He did so, first, at that time, that it might come from Him rather than from the disciples. If you feel it necessary that a person should be somewhat sharply rebuked, you conclude to do it yourself. You say to yourself, "If I send that message by the best friend I have, he will blunder over it; he will make it more cutting than I meant it to be and he will miss the point. He will inflict more pain than I intended. Therefore I will communicate the unacceptable statement myself." And have you not often felt it to be a matter of real urgency to get before all others? Yes, you who have the care of hearts and minds know that there are times when you need to do all the speaking and would like to block every other telephone in the world! You know the person and the effect which statements are likely to have upon him and, therefore, you would gladly monopolize his ears for a season.

The Savior knew that, by-and-by, this woman would hear that the mission of the Christ was only to Israel—and she might hear it in such a way as would much more depress her spirit than if He, personally, told it to her Himself. So He Himself said to her, "I am not sent to Tyre and Sidon. I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That is to say, Christ's mission as a Prophet, while He was here in the flesh, was to Israel—and to Israel He usually restricted His labors throughout His life. He told her that Himself, I think, lest she should hear it at second hand. It will be wise for us, when we find poor souls hopefully coming to Christ, to manifest thought and prudence—and introduce them to the deeper Truths of our theology—because they will hear of them one way or another. And they had better hear of them, first, from loving, tender-hearted Christians, than from hard, careless, loveless spirits whose delight is found in mere terms and phrases.

You cannot keep these young people in a conservatory! Why should you wish to do so? It is poor policy to try and conceal the Truth of God! It has a little of a Jesuitical look about it. Why should this particular Truth be concealed? Are we ashamed of it? If so, let us revise our creed, but, in the name of common honesty let us hide nothing which we believe! The more Light of God the better! The more fully the Truth of God is made known, the more surely will good come of it! For one, I bless God that I knew the Doctrines of Grace from my youth—they have been the staff of my manhood—and I believe they will be the glory of my old age! So far from being ashamed of the Election of Grace, it commands the enthusiasm of my whole being!

Again, I think that He brought that Truth before her mind, just then, because she might hear of it otherwise, when she was in a worse condition for the receiving of it. Now, this woman was desperately set on getting a blessing from Christ. Her whole heart was awake, her spirit was on fire—her whole nature was eager for the blessing. If she could stand repres-

sion at any time in her life, it was just then. "How do you know?" you ask. I know it by a kind of instinct. The story

opens for me a window into the woman's soul. I am persuaded that the Master would not have applied anything that looked like a discouraging Truth of God to her unless He had perceived that she was quite able to bear it and, perhaps, better able to bear it then than upon some future day. I think there is great wisdom in communicating Truth to people at a fit time. Did not the Lord, Himself, say, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now"? Just at that time His disciples were unfit to hear those many Truths and, therefore, the oracle of love was silent for a while. At another time the Savior abounded toward them, as He does toward us, in all wisdom and prudence—and then He made known to them the mystery of His will after a fuller measure.

The Lord does not teach us all Truth at once, but by degrees He admits us into the chambers of His hidden treasure. You know how a surgeon, when he has operated upon a blinded eye, says to his patient, "Your sight is completely restored, but during the next few days I must ask you to sit in a darkened room. I shall ask you to receive light slowly, that you may retain it surely." Infinite is the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in gradually enlightening souls! The Lord does not, all at once, let the sinner know the full extent of his sin, nor does He give him a full idea of the punishment due to it. Nor, I think, does He give him, at the beginning, all the knowledge he will have of the complete pardon of his sin and of the innumerable joys which come to pardoned sinners through Jesus Christ their Savior. Little by little, as we must feed newly-born children, not with meat, but with milk—little by little, as you teach the younger scholars in the school. Precept must be upon precept, line upon line—here a little and there a little. His mission to the house of Israel was one of the Truths which the Savior saw this poor Canaanite woman would have to learn and, therefore, He communicated it to her when she had faith enough to press over all discouragement and obtain the blessing upon which her heart was set. These two things should prove instructive.

Now I go on to deal with souls who are somewhat in this woman's case. I shall notice the discouraging word which has come to them of late, which is somewhat similar to that which came to her. And then I shall ask them to imitate the commendable act of this woman in connection with her discouragement, for though she seemed to be repulsed, she, nevertheless, came to Christ and worshipped Him. Before concluding, I wish to mention a few helpful considerations to any who may be troubled by that great doctrine which I mentioned just now. Come, Holy Comforter, and fill our hearts with heavenly cheer from this glad hour!

I. First, then, THE DISCOURAGING WORD THAT CAME TO THIS WOMAN. It was, as I have said, a certain form of the Doctrine of Election—the unquestioned Truth that God designed to bless the seed of Israel by the personal labors and testimonies of His Son Jesus—and that these blessings were not, at that time, sent to the people of Tyre and Sidon.

The Doctrine of Election has been made into a great bugbear by its unscrupulous opponents and its injudicious friends. I have read some very wonderful sermons against this doctrine in which the first thing that was evident was that the person speaking was totally ignorant of his subject! A little knowledge would have made our author hesitate and deliberate and, therefore, it was like Saul's armor to him—he had rather proceed in his naked folly! The usual way of composing a sermon against a Doctrine of Grace is this—first exaggerate and belie the doctrine and then argue against it. If you state the sublime Truth as it is found in the Bible, why, you cannot say much against it! But if you collect a number of silly expressions from hot-headed partisans and denounce these, your task will be easier. Dress up the doctrine like a man and then burn it! What a wonderful deal has been done by men in burning figures of their own stuffing!

Nobody ever believed the Doctrine of Election as I have heard it stated by Arminian controversialists. I venture to say that nobody out of Bedlam ever did believe that which has been imputed to us. Is it remarkable that we are as eager to denounce the dogmas imputed to us as ever our opponents can be? Why do they earnestly set themselves to confute what no one defends? They might as well spare themselves the trouble! Our friends abhor the doctrine as it is stated by them-selves—and we are much of their mind—though the doctrine, itself, as we would state it, is dear to us as life itself! They suppose that we never preach the Gospel freely to sinners—which thing we never fail to do with a freeness which none can excel! Can they tell us how we can improve in Gospel preaching? We should rejoice to learn!

They say that if we preach the Gospel freely, we are inconsistent, to which charge we are at no pains whatever to reply. So long as we believe that we are consistent with Scripture, it never enters into our heads to need to be consistent with ourselves! To hold all revealed Truths of God is our desire—but to compress them all into a symmetrical creed is beyond our expectation! We are such poor fallible creatures, that if we were once to fabricate a system which would be

entirely logical, we would feel sure that we must have admitted portions of theory and masses of mere guess-work into the singular fabric. In theology we live by faith, not by logic. We believe and are safe! But the moment we begin to speculate, we are like Peter sinking in the waves. If we will keep simply to what the Word of God says, we shall find in it Truths apparently in conflict, but always in agreement! On every subject there is a Truth which is set over against another Truth—the one is as true as the other! The one does not take away from the other, nor raise a question upon the other— and the one ought to be stated as well as the other—and the two set side by side. The two relative Truths make up the great road of practical truth along which our Lord travels to bless the sons of men.

Some like to run on one rail. I confess a partiality to the two and I should not like to make an excursion, tomorrow, on a railway from which one of the rails had been taken. It must be sorrowfully admitted that the Doctrine of Election has discouraged many who were

seeking the Savior, but the truth is that it ought not to do so. Viewed aright, it is a royal herald arrayed in silk and gold, freely announcing to the unworthy that the King receives sinners, according to the good pleasure of His will! How it has encouraged some of us! What marrow and fatness it is to us, now that we have found the Lord! We feed upon it as upon a Divine portion which sustains, satisfies and satiates the soul! When I first came to Christ, I was perfectly satisfied to be as one of the dogs under the table—but I would not be satisfied to be so now, since the Lord has called me to a higher place! Now that I have become one of His children, I am as Lazarus was, of whom we read, "but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." The blessed Doctrine of Election is, to my soul, as wines on the lees well refined! It is a better, deeper and more glorious fact of Divine Love than I ever hoped to realize! "He asked for water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish." We asked for pardon, but He gave us justification! We asked for a little mercy, but the Lord gave us boundless Grace, yes, Grace upon Grace, saying—"I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." If a sinner really knew the doctrine of the choice of Grace, he would not run away from it, but he would be inclined to run into its arms!

Yet to many it does seem to be as that black side of the cloud which the Lord turned upon the Egyptians and, therefore, I am going to notice the discouragement as Christ put it before this woman. He said to her, first, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "I am sent," He seemed to say, "to the Jews. I am sent to the house of Israel, but I am not sent to you." That great Truth of God, she would have been sure to find out sooner or later, and if she had found it out later, she might have feared that the cure of her daughter would be taken away from her because it had been received contrary to the mission of the Messiah. Jesus lets her know this hard Truth at once, so that it may not worry her afterwards. When she did obtain the cure of her daughter, He would have her know that it was given openly and above-board—and not by a blunder of pity, or an oversight of charity. She was to be, once and for all, assured that the Lord Jesus had not forgotten Himself—that He knew all about the limitation of His commission during His mortal life and that in overstepping it, He knew what He was doing, and had not been wafted beyond Himself by the impetuosity of His spirit.

Now, there is such a thing as the choice of God. The Lord has a people who are redeemed from among men. The Lord Jesus has a people of whom He has said, "Yours they were, and You gave them to Me." Some are ordained unto eternal life and, therefore, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Does this fact discourage you? I do not see why it should. Why should you not be among that number? "But suppose that I am not?" asks one. Why do you not suppose that you are? You do not know anything about it—therefore why suppose at all? To give up supposing would be a far more sensible thing than to brew for yourself a deadly potion of despair out of the worthless husks of mere supposition! I have enough to do to

bear up under facts, without overloading myself with conjectures. What God has not revealed, we are not bound to know. Indeed, it would seem better for us to be in ignorance where the Lord grants no information. The Lord has chosen a people to be saved and I am glad to think that He has done so, for none can prove that I am not of the number!

If there are some whom God will save, then I know, also, who they are, for He tells me that they are such as repent of sin, confess it, forsake it and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life! These same things would my soul desire to do—and when I do so, I know that I am of the chosen number and shall be saved! What is there in this to discourage a soul? Yet it does discourage some. When people are in the dark, they are afraid of anything, everything! Nothing!! "There were they in great fear, where no fear was." Once get a person into a low and nervous state, and the fall of a leaf suggests an avalanche! The least shadow of a cloud foretells the total extinction of the orb of day and a drop of rain is the commencement of the final conflagration! "Odd expression," you say. Yet it is not so singular and outrageous as many of

the inferences drawn by a resolute despondency. Alas, for these troubled ones—they feel that they cannot be saved because there is an Israel whom God has chosen to be saved!

Our Lord put before this woman something worse than the positive fact of the choice of Israel. He declared the negative side of the sacred choice. He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is very little that you and I, who are ministers of the Gospel, have to do with preaching about what Christ is not sent to do. Here I fear that unrenewed minds, armed with a pitiless logic, have sinned grievously against the love of God. The Truth of God treated Scripturally is a holy medicine, but treated after the manner of the schools, it may sour into a deadly poison! Poor penitent Hearts, there is nothing in the Divine decree to shut out one of you from hope! "The Lord has not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; He has not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you Me in vain." Nevertheless, the Savior did distinctly turn the blackest side of the doctrine to the woman, and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

What was worse, in her case, was that she knew that this election, as far as Christ had stated it, must exclude her, for He told her that He was not sent except to the house of Israel and she well knew that she did not belong to that house. She was a Canaanite woman, a native of Tyre and Sidon and, therefore, distinctly shut out—and Jesus Himself had told her so. That must have made the sentence fall like a death-knell on her ears! If the servants tell us such a thing as that, we can forget it, but if the Master says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," then the matter ends in blank despair. The poor Canaanite woman might have very logically ended her pleadings, saying, "What more can be done? I cannot go against the word from Christ's own lips." Yet she did not so, but, like a true heroine, she pressed her suit even to the joyful end.

You see her cause for discouragement was much worse than yours can ever be, for you do not know that you are shut out—there is nothing in your race or city which excludes you. Moreover, Christ has never told you that you are shut out. I do not think that any minister has ever told you so, but if you have ever gathered from any ministry under Heaven that there is no hope for you, you have no right to come to such a conclusion! In my soul's intent, I have never desired the discouragement of a single soul among you all. Far rather would I die that you might live! But if you have copied out bitter words and have come to wretched conclusions, then I would urge you to be as sensible and as brave as this woman was, who, when she had not gathered it from ministers, but had received it from Christ, Himself, that He was not sent to such as she was, yet nevertheless persevered, pressed forward and came to Him and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, help me."

Some may say to me this evening—"Why talk about this difficulty at all?" I talk about it because it exists. It frets and worries many minds. Many are troubled and the servants of God must deal with their trouble. Gladly enough would I let these fears alone if they would let my people alone! The stern fact of predestination meets most men somewhere or other—even in the paths of philosophy it is not escaped! And when it comes darkly over truly gracious souls, much of its power for mischief will lie in the ignorance of the person assailed. If we were better instructed, we would probably find no mystery where all is now mystery! Men forget that the ordination of God deals with everything—not only with the spiritual, but quite as certainly with the natural world. Yet they never allow it to interfere with their labor for bread, their struggle for wealth, or their race for fame!

Why should they dissociate the matter of salvation from the 10,000 affairs which are encompassed in the same ring? Why will men act, in other matters, according to common sense, but upon this matter make molehills into mountains? They fancy that the will of God settles one or two matters and leaves all the rest loose! They dream that it takes away free agency and responsibility—and makes men into machines. They cannot understand that Divine plan which interferes with no will of man and yet secures the will of God—nor can they see how everything proceeds by the free agency of the creatures as much as if there were no God—and yet God rules over all. I wish that this subject did not vex men, but it is idle to wish. It has vexed them from the beginning and will vex them even to the end. As we cannot alter facts, we must deal with them.

Dear troubled Souls, Jesus would have you come to Him without fear! He invites you to trust in Him, yes, more—He commands you to believe on His name! Nothing He has thought, or ordained, or purposed, or predestinated has any tendency to drive you from Him. Whatever predestination may, or may not, be, this one thing is sure—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Everything beckons towards His Cross and Himself. Come, and let nothing hinder you even for a single hour!

II. Now, observe THE COMMENDABLE ACT OF THIS WOMAN. In considering what she did, we shall come to

the practical part of the subject. And I notice that she did not attempt, for a single moment, to deny what Jesus had said. He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and she did not reply, "Lord, that is not true." She did not question anything which Jesus asserted—that would have been gross presumption on her part. She did not quibble, or object, or raise opposition. She accepted what Jesus said without any argument whatever. She did not attempt to say that it was unjust that the Christ of God should come only to the house of Israel. She did not assert, as some have shamelessly done, that God should deal with one as with another, or else He would be a respecter of persons. All that kind of thing, which we have heard so often, was far from her mind!

She was silent and submissive as to the Savior's speech. She did not even argue that surely, in her solitary instance, she might be permitted to break through the regulation. She did not argue at all. She left the Truth of God, which to her was dark, in the keeping of Him whose name is light. She sees the black cloud, but she passes through it, feeling that it cannot be anything more than a cloud—and so she comes to the Savior's feet and cries, "Lord, help me. I do not understand this. I am all in a fog and all in a muddle. Lord, help me! Lord, I do not ask to understand, but I do cry for help. Enable me to believe and to receive the blessing, let the dark Truth say what it may."

Many persons are so weak in judgment that if they have to do battle with a difficulty before they can be saved, they will perish in the attempt. Oh, poor Heart, do not battle with a difficulty at all! Leave it alone! If it is a great Truth for men and you are nothing but a babe, and hardly that, do not choke yourself with man's meat. If a great mystery meddles with you, then fly to Jesus Christ for relief from it—with this prayer in your mouth—"Lord, help me. I am in a difficulty. Help my understanding. I am despondent—help my heart. But especially, I am full of iniquity—help my poor and sorrowful case and do for me what I cannot do for myself. Save my soul and deliver me."

Now, then, we have seen what she did not do, and in this she is admirable. Now let us see what the woman actually did. She came to Jesus. Read the words, "Then came she and worshipped Him." First, she came to Jesus and did not go round about. She came not to Peter, or James, or John—she came to Jesus. She did not stand still and cry, as she had done before, from a distance, but crying unto Him, she came to Jesus, drew near to Him, grasped Him. I do not doubt she fell at His feet as though she would have held Him. She came to Jesus. Now, from everything beneath the heavens, poor Soul, fly to the living, personal Christ! There is such a One now living as Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, whose delight it is to deal with the sicknesses, infirmities and diseases of men. Do not, I pray you, stop in doctrines, or in precepts, or in ministers, or in services—but come straight away to Christ—the living, personal Savior, anointed of the Lord. Your hope lies in Him!

"Which way shall I go?" you ask. If it were a matter of physical coming, I know that if the road were long and dreary, you would start upon it, tonight, without delay. But it is a mental coming. You are to come to Jesus, not with feet and legs, but with mind and heart! Remember that there is such a Person. Consider Him. Think of Him. Believe Him. Reverence Him, for He is the Son of the Highest. Trust Him, for He is "mighty to save." This is coming to Him. Since He is a Savior, let Him fulfill His office upon you. You greatly need saving—give Him the opportunity of showing what He is able to do. Say within your soul, "I am the chief of sinners—lost, ruined, and undone. Behold, I come to Him! If I perish, I will perish trusting in Him." It cannot be that a soul can die relying upon Jesus—sooner shall Heaven and earth pass away than Jesus fail to save the soul that trusts in Him!

The woman came to Jesus immediately after He uttered His words of discouragement. We read in the text, "Then came she." "Then came she and worshipped Him." What, then—when He seemed to drive her away—then? Why, He had just told her that He was not sent to her. "Then came she." He had just uttered a most mysterious and discouraging Truth of God, but, "Then came she." That kind of faith which comes to Christ only on a summer's day among the lilies of the field is not of much use! Flowers and butterflies and all things which come of the calm and the bright are soon gone—we need a hope which can survive the frost! That is the sort of faith which comes to Jesus in the middle of winter, when the cold devours and the fierce blast prowls among the snowdrifts. That is the faith which saves the soul—the faith which ventures to the Savior in spite of all weathers.

Saving faith learns to credit contradictions, to laugh at impossibilities and to say, "It cannot be, but yet it will be." Our poor friend who was buffeted by our Lord's words was secretly upheld by the sight of His Person. What can a word be compared with a person—compared with such a Person as that of Jesus, the Sinner's Friend? She believes Him rather

than His way of speaking! He says that He is not sent, but there He is! He says that He is not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—and yet there He is! He has come here where there are none of the house of Israel! She seems to say to herself, "Whether He was sent or not, here He is. He has come among Tyrians and Sidonians—and I have come to Him! Therefore He is not kept from me by His commission. I do not understand His language, but I do understand the look of His face. I do understand His manner. I do understand the winsomeness of His blessed Person. I can see that compassion dwells in the Son of David. I am sure that He has all power given to Him to heal my daughter—and here He is. I do not know about His commission, but I do know Him and I shall still plead with Him." So she came to Jesus, then and there, and why shouldn't you?

Now, Soul, is this the darkest night that ever was for you? Come to Jesus now! Are you quite sure that your case is hopeless? Quite certain that your doom is sealed? Have you written out your own death warrant? Have you made a covenant with death and a league with Hell? Do you feel sure that you will be damned before the morning light breaks on

you? Then come to Jesus Christ now! "Then came she." That is the thing—to come to Christ when He has a drawn sword in His hand, as Bunyan puts it—to come to Christ when He frowns—to come to Christ when everything says, "keep back." "Then came she." Brave woman! By His Grace I will even do the same.

But now notice how she came. "Then came she and worshipped Him." My heart greatly rejoices! I wish I could picture the scene. She did not stop to work out the difficult question with which He posed to her—she looked at Him and she came to Him and when she got near to Him, she did the best thing she could—she worshipped Him! Down she went on her face before Him! And when she looked up, it was with a look of reverent awe and childlike confidence! Blessed be His name—if we cannot understand Him, we can worship Him!

Now, you have been thinking about yourself, and the more you do this, the more you will despond and despair. No possible comfort can come to you by that road. If I were you, I would give up that task and begin to think about Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of men. "Oh, but I am such a sinner!" Yes, and He is such a Savior! "Sir, I am so black with evil!" But He is able to make us whiter than snow! "Alas, I greatly deserve His curse!" Yes, but He was "made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." By death the Lord has put that curse away. Behold Him, then, upon the Cross removing human sin, and see if you cannot copy the woman's example—"Then came she and worshipped Him." Now, try, poor timorous spirit—try and worship! This is a homage which a humble heart can render in acceptable style.

A self-conceited heart will do anything sooner than worship. Pride, self and rebellion cannot worship—but humble hearts are happy in the deed! Oh, that you would now bow with me before the Lamb of God! Worship Him now! "Blessed Son of God! Blessed Son of God! That ever You should become Man for men and die in the sinner's place! Oh, Your love! Your wondrous love! And You have gone up into Glory now. You sit at the right hand of God and there I worship You as my Lord and my God! If I may not call You my Savior, yet You shall be my God! If I may not rejoice in You, at least I will worship You." This is holy talk! It has a perfume about it which the Lord loves! That way faith will come to you. That way life and peace and rest will come to you. This trembling Canaanite "came to Him and worshipped Him"— follow her and share her blessedness!

Then, notice her prayer. One has well observed that if you were on a rotten piece of ice and you could not get to the shore, or feared that you could not, one of the very best ways would be to go down on all fours and try to crawl along as gingerly as you could—and try to get off the ice and somehow onto the shore. This woman so proceeds. She seems to fall flat upon that awful Truth of God which she cannot understand! She adores and worships and reverences Him that spoke it—and thus she spreads out her weakness upon every possible resting place—and comes safely to shore. "Lord," she says, "help me. Oh, do not put me back,

but help me! Lord, do not leave me, but help me! Whatever You have to say to me, say it, and I will worship You while You say it—

" Though You slay me, I will trust, Praise You even from the dust,"

but, Lord, help me!"

My dear Hearer, do that, and do it now! No doctrine will trouble you long—I am sure it will not. On the contrary, you will enquire why you ever let it trouble you. Do you ever let predestination trouble you in the matter of your daily business? Tomorrow you hope to make a few shillings at your daily calling, but it may be that you will not—you may

lose some. Why do you not say to yourself, "It may be that the Providence of God has arranged that I shall not earn anything to-morrow; therefore I shall stay at home and do nothing"? Why, you are not such a fool! You will take down your shop shutters, display your goods and do your best—or you will go out to your calling and look for your usual wage. Let the Providence of God do what it may, your business is to do what you can! So is it with a poor seeking soul—that soul's business is to let the Lord do what He wills, but meanwhile to cry, "Lord, help me!" Wholly submissive, but heartily adoring, lie at Jesus' feet and believe that this Divine Savior must and will save every soul that hangs upon Him. This is the way of wisdom; follow it! God help you to do so, and to do so at once.

I do not think that I need to say anything more by way of comforting you, for that may well suffice, if the Lord shall incline your heart to seek His face at once. Remember this, however, that there never was a soul, yet, that came to Christ and Christ cast it away! Remember, again, that there never can be such a soul, for He has said, "Him that comes to Me, I will by no means cast out." Remember, again, that every soul that ever came to Christ came because the Father drew him—and that every soul that came, found out, afterwards, that there was an election of Grace that encompassed him— and that He was in it! Even this poor woman turned out to be one that Christ was sent to bless! Although, as a general matter of fact, in His lifetime He came to the seed of Israel, just as the Prophets came to Israel, yet there always appeared an exception about the Prophets and, therefore, it was no marvel that there should be exceptions in the case of their Lord.

Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, but unto none of them was the Prophet sent, save to a woman of Sarepta, who belonged to the very city out of which this woman came! Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha, yet none of them was healed save Naaman the Syrian. Naaman did not belong to the favored race at all, but was a far-off stranger—and yet he received the blessing of healing from the Lord God of Israel! The election of God as to these temporal things seemed to exclude all but the seed of Israel—but it was only in seeming—there were always some strangers in the chosen line. And so that particular form of election which consisted in our Lord's personal ministry being only to the Jews did not cause the exclusion of this poor believing woman. To her, Jesus Christ had

manifestly come in the chosen line, for there He was! He was outside His own boundary! He had come to her!

Now, at this moment, whatever you may think about this doctrine or that, Jesus Christ has come to you. I have preached to you His Truth and you have heard it! Yes, and you have felt something of its power. Yield to it, I beseech you. If you yield to it and come to Him and trust Him, then rejoice that the lines of electing love have encompassed you! You are His! You could not and would not have come to Him in prayer and simple faith if it had not been so! Your coming to Him proves that His eternal love of old went after you! Go home, O woman of a sorrowful spirit, and be no more sad! The Lord bless you all, for Christ's sake. Amen.